

# National Model to Boost Student Achievement Under Review in Iowa

Three years after the Legislature raised standards in schools to boost student achievement and ensure kids are prepared for jobs in today's global economy, the Iowa Department of Education is in the process of reviewing a new national model of education standards to determine how it aligns with Iowa's standards.

The Common Core State Standards was a voluntary, state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The purpose of this effort was to develop standards that each state could adopt voluntarily to provide a common set of standards across states.

The Common Core State Standards were developed to be aligned with college and work expectations, to include rigorous content and skills, and to be internationally benchmarked. The Common Core State Standards initiative encompasses standards for English, language arts, and mathematics.

The review the Department is conducting will help the State Board of Education to decide whether or not the state will adopt Common Core State Standards as our own state standards.

The Department must look at how the Common Core aligns with the work the Department has already embarked on with the Iowa Core, which provides a common set of skills and concepts in literacy, math, science, social studies, and 21st century learning skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills) that all Iowa students must know by the time they graduate from high school. The Iowa Core are to be implemented in high schools by 2012-2013 and in kindergarten through eighth grade by 2014-2015.

With this review, the Department is tentatively scheduled to present a recommendation to the State Board of Education at its July 29, 2010 meeting. The State Board has the authority to approve standards for the state.

A preliminary review, which was provided at the State Board's retreat in June, showed that there are many similarities between the Iowa Core and the Common Core State Standards. There are also some differences. One is that the Common Core is laid out grade by grade, whereas the Iowa Core is provided in grade spans, such as grade six through eight.

States do have the option to add to the Common Core State Standards, which Iowa may do if it adopts the standards.

A key similarity is the goal of both the Common Core and the Iowa Core: To ensure Iowa students are well-prepared for either furthering their education after high school or embarking on a career.